

April 1, 2010

Chief's Corner



I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the efforts and good work put forth by the men and women of the City's Public Safety Communications Unit.

PSCU is the first of many vital steps when Police and Fire assistance is needed. They are the voice of the Department when the public needs help.

Recent enhancements made to PSCU is part of the Department's promise to bring the best possible service to all those who live, work and play in the City of Miami Beach.

I am grateful to all the employees of PSCU not only during Telecommunicators Week but for a continuous job well done.

Carlos E Noriega,
Chief of Police

The Beat



The Public Safety Telecommunications Issue

During the month of April men and women from around the country who work in Public Safety Communications are honored. This year we're dedicating the April issue of The Beat in honor of the men and women of the City of Miami Beach's Public Safety Communications Unit (PSCU). PSCU is located on the fourth floor of the Miami Beach Police Department Headquarters. PSCU is responsible for answering all incoming 911 emergency and non emergency calls for service. In 2009 PSCU answered over 300,000 telephone calls for service of which 1/3 of those calls were 911 related.

PSCU is responsible for dispatching police and fire rescue units within the City limits. In 2008, PSCU underwent a major renovation and is now a state of the art 911 center. PSCU is budgeted for a total of 55 positions. A Police Captain oversees the operations of the Unit. There are four job classifications in the Unit, which are Supervisor, Dispatcher, Complaint Operator II, Communications Operator. The city has a fully functional 911 back up site at the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) located at the main Fire Station on Pinetree Drive. In a case where there is an overflow of emergency calls, those

calls can be re-routed to Miami-Dade's 911 Center. PSCU is manned 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The employees work 8 hour shifts. The employees of PSCU are considered essential personnel and are required to work during hurricanes and subjected to what is referred to as Alpha / Bravo shifts (days off cancelled, 12 hour shifts) as mandated.



Why are you asking me these Questions?

The employees of PSCU have the daunting task of primarily dealing with people in extreme cases of sudden emergencies. Those callers exhibit a range of emotions such as fear, confusion, and anger. In cases of severe emotional stress during emergency situations, rationalization is not always on the forefront. It is the task of the PSCU employee to remain calm and obtain all vital information to bring the incident at hand

to a safe conclusion. Many times the caller cannot understand why they are being asked "these questions" and help is not being sent. In every emergency scenario, basic information is obtain and a call is routed to the Dispatcher as soon as possible. The PSCU employee continues asking vital questions following established protocols to obtain information needed for responding personnel and to provide the best possible service

to the citizens of Miami Beach. Rest assured help is on the way.

Mark Your Calendars

Holocaust Remembrance	04/11
Aids Walk	04/17
Gay Pride	04/17
Health & Fitness Expo	04/17
Admin Professional Day	04/21
Earth Day	04/22
Take Child to Work Day	04/22

Get to know your Communications Unit

By knowing who works where, what the job classifications are, and what are the responsibilities consists of, helps everyone have a better understanding of the job. The following is brief synopsis of the positions of PSCU:

Communication Operator I (15), the primary function of this position is to answer the yearly average of 300,000 phone calls, obtain vital information and route the calls to the appropriate Dispatcher.

Complaint Operator II (9), staff the position known as Records and the Message Center. The COII is responsible for the computer systems in which criminal history can be obtained, driver licenses and tags can be checked.

They are also responsible for the entering and removal of all stolen items from a global system.

Dispatcher (20), receive all calls taken by the COI and dispatch them to appropriate officers and / or fire rescue. Dispatchers are trained to dispatch both Fire & Police.

Dispatchers and COIs are trained as a COI and man the phones when they are not on the radio.

Supervisors (6) work directly inside the unit and oversee all aspects of their respective shifts.

Communications Managers (2), are civilian employees who oversee the Supervisors and the day to day operations of the unit.

Captain (1), is the only sworn position within the unit, The Captain oversees the operations of the entire unit

Records Custodian (1), is responsible for the maintain all records within the Unit and responding to public records requests as received.

Clerk Typist (1), assists with the Unit's clerical needs.

All employees of PSCU must obtain and maintain certifications in Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) and from the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) because of the sensitive information available to them.



"Some call them dispatchers, others are called operators or clerk, or telecommunicator or aide. Some are police officers; but most are not, some are firefighters but most are not. The name is not important, But they are....."

Alan Burton

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Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD)

PSCU personnel are certified by the National Academy of Emergency Dispatch to provide emergency life saving information to the caller pending Fire Rescue arrival. Prior to being EMD certified, they must also be certified in CPR. Emergency Medical Dispatch is a priority dispatch system which is recognized as an essential component of effective emergency dispatch. After routing a call for service to the Fire Department, the COI will offer to provide easy to follow instructions to aid the patient until the proper Fire Department personnel arrives. With a willing caller and utilizing a standardize protocol flow chart

the COI will begin to ask questions and provide aid as requested. The sets, which are in English and Spanish, route the COI to specific charts based on the answers being provided. With this system, the COI can provide basic vital instructions as opening an airway or providing instructions on how to perform CPR. The COI's role is crucial during this process in providing positive reinforcement to the caller especially at times when the caller begins to "freak out". Currently the EMD is a series of charts. In the near future, the EMD system will be automated, which will provide even faster service. The

men and women of PSCU are committed to the welfare of all the residents and visitors in the City of Miami Beach

